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the white left in the

MOTHER COUNTRY

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SAM KEEN

DEATH OF THE DEVIL?

HENRY ANSGAR KELLY

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NEWS & VIEWS

Credit Due

By and large it's low-profile involvement, but it sums up to an impressive record of service.

We're referring to the work of Catholic churchmen on presidential and national commissions.

Bishop Raymond Gallagher of Lafayette, Ind., helped coordinate the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, which found Mr. Nixon's proposed national income plan of $1500 at least three times below what it should be to be adequate to the needs of the poor.

New York's Cardinal Cooke served with distinction on the Presidential Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, and, it will be recalled, joined in the minority conclusion that civil disobedience might at times be the only means of disposing of unjust laws and unjust policies of government.

Controversial and courageous positions those.

But the most dramatic, continuing public service is being provided by Father Theodore Hesburgh as chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Several months ago the Hesburgh group scored Nixon Administration school policies as "a major retreat" in desegregating the South's public schools. Now, as an accompanying *Commonweal* editorial discusses, the Commission charges laxity and a "major breakdown" in enforcement of federal laws and executive orders against racial discrimination.

The Nixon Administration was unhappy with that report — predictably — and sought to delay its issuance until after the elections. But, as Father Hesburgh made plain, the Commission did not consider the report a political document. It went ahead and released the report as planned. A gutsy move.

The *Washington Post* hailed the civil-rights-enforcement report as "an invaluable case study." It also hailed the Commission.

"More or less from the day of its establishment, the Civil Rights Commission has been telling government things it did not want to hear or to believe or to act on," the *Post* commented, "and it has maintained an extraordinary record—in retrospect—of having been right."

That's considerable compliment, and compliment for which Notre Dame's president can claim a large measure of personal credit.

Camara on Castro

Dom Helder Câmara, Archbishop of Recife in northeast Brazil, is another who believes that Fidel Castro was shaped by the forces of fear and misunderstanding.

"I'm convinced that in the beginning Fidel Castro had not the slightest intention of being a Communist," Helder Câmara is quoted in an anthology of his writings and talks newly published in Uruguay. "He hungered and thirsted after justice, though. In our continent, in my country, anyone who distributes food and clothes is a hero, a saint. But if he is astute enough to see that the masses need human promotion, then he is a revolutionary, a subversive, a Communist thug. I think that if Fidel had been given a little more understanding, he would have kept to a more Christian line. Because very often what we call Communism is really Christianity."

Amen.

More Heat on Gulf

It's Gulf Oil versus the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ—maybe.

Gulf is threatening the Conference with court action over a Conference resolution accusing Gulf of providing "support for the suppression of the African national liberation movements" and of playing a dominant role in "maintaining the suppression and suffering" of the people of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, Portuguese colonies all.

Gulf's alleged legal grounds would be defamation of corporate character, according to *American Report*, the sprightly new weekly of Clergy and Laymen Concerned.

The Ohio Conference adopted its Gulf resolution back last June, and at the time urged its 230,000 members to turn in their Gulf credit cards. Stockholders were advised not to sell, but to exercise their voting rights to seek to establish "humane policies" at Gulf.

Later, B. R. Dorsey, president of the Gulf Oil Corporation, informed Rev. Reuben J. Schroer, past president of the Conference, that Gulf's attorneys had been asked "to determine what legal action should be taken to obtain redress for the damages done to Gulf . . . by the dissemination of the defamatory document."

United Church of Christ officials are taking the threat calmly. Dr. Thomas Merton, director of the UCC's international relations office, doubts that Gulf will finally take the case to court. "I don't think they would want to respond to a possible subpoena of the records of their African operations," said Merton.

American Report adds that Gulf might also want to avoid the risk of opening up its federal income tax reports, "which show that in 1968, for instance, Gulf paid less than one percent of its income in federal taxes, less than taxpayers in the lowest income bracket."

Odds and Ends

—Here's growth product for you: the Defense Department telephone directory (for its Washington installations) has more pages (224) than the phone directory for the City of Boise (132). Boise has a population of some 50,000.

—The National Council of Catholic Women rejected only one of 28 resolutions at its recent 50th anniversary convention: support of selective conscientious objection.

—That nutty list of 65 "radical" campus speakers, compiled over the summer and released Oct. 14 by the House Internal Security Committee, wasn't helped by including the name Fred Hampton. He's been dead since Dec. 4, 1969.

JOHN DEEDY

"Feelthy pictures?"

Peterson—*Vancouver Sun*, Canada

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CORRESPONDENCE

De-stinging WASP

East Sandwich, Mass.

To the Editors: In response to Harvey Turner on the WASP [Letter, Oct. 16]: I think he doesn't get the term in context. It was used when I first encountered it, by WASPS to WASPS and about other WASPS. It was one of those half-humorous words of self-castigation a whole group will use in its effort to reflect on its own shortcomings.

I don't know that there is an equivalent Catholic term, but if there is I am sure Protestants would use it in the same spirit in which Michael Novak uses WASP, i.e., in the spirit generated by Vatican II in which Catholics and Protestants alike are trying to come to terms with some of their basic difficulties

HARRIET MAROT TAYLOR
A WASP

Operating from Strength

Bryn Mawr, Pa.

To the Editors: Although *Commonweal* will undoubtedly receive complaints about Ramsdell Gurney's Cold War Analysis [Oct. 16], the case he makes is an understated one. The key point he mentions—but fails, in my opinion, to give the emphasis it deserves—is that since 1945 U.S. policymakers have consistently thought and acted from a position of *known* military and economic superiority vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, so that the Soviets could always be counted on to react conservatively. Practically a situation of peaceful-co-existence-at-any-price—for them, but not for us. Thus, the State Department judges U.S. foreign policy as "more activist" than Soviet policy, to quote one of their studies.

But don't take my word for it. Listen to Richard M. Nixon, the incarnation of 25 years of Cold War America: "I would also point this out—an interesting thing about Soviet military and diplomatic history: They have always thought in defensive terms and if you

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WHOSE LAW, WHOSE ORDER?

As noted in these pages last week, the cause of law and order persists. In these sophisticated days, no candidate for public office would really have the nerve to come out for apple pie and motherhood—at least not directly. Instead, these days, they come out for law and order. Capitalizing on people's real fears of violent crime, candidates and officeholders alike are afraid not to endorse any measure that ostensibly will help matters, even when some features of such measures are clearly repressive and probably unconstitutional. Thus a Nixon-backed crime bill with obvious bad as well as good features passed the Senate in January by a 73-to-1 vote with only Republican Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky displaying the courage to vote against it on Constitutional grounds. In the same fashion the House rammed the bill through before the election recess by a top-heavy vote of 341 to 26, despite qualms reportedly felt by many of the members of the House. In this election year, law and order is the thing; and wise politicos apparently consider this one of the year's most explosive issues.

Given all this, it will be interesting to note the public and private reaction to the recent report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, chaired by Notre Dame's Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, which we mentioned last week and which we think is worth further discussion. Raising what would seem to be a fundamental question of law and order, the Commission reported that there had been a "major breakdown" in enforcement of federal laws and executive orders against racial discrimination. "The credibility of the Government's total civil rights effort has been seriously undermined," said Father Hesburgh. "Unless we get serious about this, the country is on a collision course."

It may be that more legislation is needed in particular areas, but the Commission pointed out that there is an impressive array of laws, executive orders and judicial decisions that at least try to provide protection against discrimination in virtually every aspect of life—in education, employment, housing, voting, administration of justice, access to places of public accommodation, and participation in the benefits of federally assisted programs. "There is, however," the Commission's report said, "a gap between what these guarantees have promised and what has actually been de-

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livered . . . discrimination persists and the goal of equal opportunity is far from achievement." Every such law that has been passed and every favorable executive order on civil rights has been hailed, and rightly so. But legal mandates must be implemented, and it is here that the Commission finds a major breakdown. No agency of the government has been provided with sufficient staff and resources to carry out its civil rights responsibilities with maximum effectiveness. In most departments and agencies, says the Commission, the chief civil rights officer is of low rank and reports to someone other than the head of the agency. In other words, efforts for civil rights are not high-priority activities. Many agencies are completely passive about the whole problem; the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, for example, generally relies on individuals to file complaints, rarely initiating attacks on bias on its own. Further, there has been a widespread failure to employ the sanctions that are available; according to the *N.Y. Times*, for instance, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance has never terminated a contract or debarred a contractor from further government work because of racial discrimination. And if two agencies directly charged with civil rights responsibility drag their feet, what can be expected of other departments and public bodies?

The Nixon Administration tried to persuade the Commission to hold off release of its report until after the elections, but Father Hesburgh and his associates refused, not considering the report political. Indeed, the report stresses that the problem is not peculiar to the Nixon era; there has never been any substantial period of time in the past, the Commission noted, when civil rights enforcement was at a uniformly high level. Yet it is with the present that the Commission must deal, and its report therefore urged President Nixon to display "courageous moral leadership" in racial matters and to set up a committee inside the White House specifically to oversee enforcement of civil rights laws.

Here, then, is a chance for a real start toward law and order, rather than a political mirage, and on an issue that has the gravest national implications. Failure to carry out court decisions and to enforce civil rights legislation already on the books can only lead to contempt for the whole body of law, thus endangering the health of the nation. If we want to show people, young and old, black and white, on campus and off, that this is truly a nation of laws, here is our chance. We hope President Nixon will seize the opportunity.

THE LAY SITUATION

There was surprising candidness in the report submitted to the Vatican Council of the Laity by former executive secretary Martin Work of the National Council of Catholic Men. The standard U.S. lay organizations—men's and women's councils, Knights of Columbus, Vincent de Paul Society—are failing from parish to national level, Work reported; the major Catholic youth organizations, he added, have all been wiped out in just a few years' time. That's not the type information usually circulated from officialdom.

On the other hand, there is nothing markedly revelatory in Work's report. Anyone with half an eye has been able to see the lay movement running down the drain. The curious detail is the casualness with which in the face of signals such as this the institution is able to operate according to old, unimaginative modes in so many matters involving the laity. It seems the surest prescription for disaster—a deactivated, disinvolved church.

Eagle Over The Lettuce Fields

"If the union label doesn't show an eagle, then it isn't ours." This is the warning being given store managers and consumers across the country by Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers Organizing Committee as it launches its national boycott of non-union California-Arizona iceberg lettuce. For the Farm Workers, who on August 24th successfully concluded their five-year grape strike, the new struggle is as serious as the old. At stake is UFWOC's ability to show that it can stop growers from signing "back-door" agreements with unions which have not been organizing in the fields and which the workers don't want.

Ironically, UFWOC's success in grapes is one reason for the trouble in lettuce. No sooner had Cesar Chavez sent a telegram asking growers in Salinas, Santa Maria, and the Imperial Valley for a union representation election, than the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association of Salinas decided the easiest way out of its labor problems would be to turn to the Western Conference of Teamsters. The Teamsters, who as one company official admitted "did not even claim to represent any field workers," have a recent history of trying to enter the agricultural arena by offering contracts more beneficial to growers than workers. (The most flagrant case occurred in 1966 at the DiGiorgio Ranches, where on the basis of winning a company-sponsored election the Teamsters claimed to represent workers and then were badly defeated by UFWOC in an election supervised by the American Arbitration Association.) Since 1967, when they gave up a "sweetheart contract" signed with the Perelli-Minetti Wineries, the Teamsters have, however, had a jurisdictional agreement with the Farm Workers, and it was this agreement that UFWOC assumed would apply to their organizing efforts in Salinas.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. In

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its violence the Salinas lettuce strike of 1970, in which more than 6,000 workers left the fields in support of a UFWOC contract, resembled nothing so much as the famous 1936 Salinas lettuce strike, in which the courts, the police, and the growers did everything in their power to crush the Vegetable Packers Union. Jerry Cohen, General Counsel for UFWOC, was hospitalized for a week after a beating he received while attempting to see a worker-client on the Al Hansen Ranch. An eighteen-year-old female striker was punched in the mouth outside the Pic'n Pac fields and told, "Your lawyer is dead; what's the use of striking?" Three days later Clofas Guzman was shot in the leg while on a picket line at the Pisoni Ranch, and less than a week afterwards Benito Cervantes was intentionally struck down by a car driven by a grower employee. The Salinas Police Chief and the Monterey County Sheriff both deny taking sides, but nonetheless the Attorney General of California has been looking into what UFWOC has charged is "selective, discriminatory law enforcement."

UFWOC is not, however, counting on the State or the courts to be much help. UFWOC's attempt to get an injunction against further violence by the growers and the Teamsters was dismissed by Judge Melvin Cohen of the San Mateo Superior Court, who labelled it a "publicity stunt" and asked UFWOC attorneys if they represented Cesar Chavez, "star of radio, TV, and newspapers." Subsequently, UFWOC received an even worse legal setback. Although Judge Marion Smith refused to issue an injunction against UFWOC on the grounds that it had violated California law forbidding jurisdictional strikes (he could find no evidence that the Teamsters represented workers), Superior Court Judge Anthony Brazil had no such qualms. On September 16th Judge Brazil issued a permanent injunction against UFWOC strike activities, making it impossible for the union to picket or encourage workers to leave the fields. When Cesar Chavez and representatives from eight ranches attempted to test the ruling, the police refused to arrest them, but the next day 180 workers were arrested while picketing, and the fines and court costs involved in such action have made it impossible for the union to attempt massive civil disobedience.

Judge Brazil's ruling, which is expected to take months to reverse, is, however, just one of several crucial problems UFWOC faces. One of the key clauses in the Teamster-grower contracts is that the latter's lettuce can bear "union picked and packed" labels. Thus, UFWOC boycotters are placed in the difficult position of having to explain to store-owners and consumers that only the appearance of the UFWOC eagle guarantees "real union" lettuce. Finally, UFWOC's finances—never good—have been severely drained by the grape boycott, and the union is now functioning on so tight a budget that it has had to be very cautious about the number of boycotters it could afford to send out: even on its standard salary of $5 a week plus room and board.

In UFWOC's favor, on the other hand, are a number of factors. The most conspicuous of these is that the machinery of the grape boycott can be used for the lettuce boycott. This situation has not been lost on companies. The principal reason that United Fruit, which owns Interharvest lettuce, and Purex, which owns Fresh Pict lettuce, (together they account for 19 percent of California-Arizona production) are the first two Salinas lettuce growers to sign with UFWOC is their awareness that a boycott against them would damage interests far beyond their lettuce holdings. Equally important from UFWOC's point of view is the fact that lettuce is not nearly the California-Arizona monopoly that grapes are. UFWOC expects to be able to give store managers and customers at least a 30 percent leeway in where they can buy their lettuce

UFWOC's contracts, which provide an average wage of about $2.15 an hour, are not only a financial improvement over the Teamster-grower agreements but also establish new working conditions. These are particularly relevant to an industry in which work has not been done by families so much as young, single men, *lechugeros,* who have traditionally lived in company housing and in the five to ten years their health permitted them to work the continuously wet lettuce fields, labored under the strict control of foremen-contractors. UFWOC's contracts call for a hiring hall in which workers *and* foremen are under union discipline, and in addition to a health plan, the UFWOC contract requires a ban on such deadly pesticides as 2, 4-5T, DDT, and Aldrin. It is over these issues, ignored by the Teamsters, rather than wages (an increase of one cent per head of lettuce would nearly double worker earnings, which is five times what UFWOC is asking) that the Farm Workers and the growers are now deadlocked.

How long it will take UFWOC to win its latest boycott is difficult to predict. The Teamsters, when asked by growers to break their current lettuce contracts, have done so, but the approximately 70 Salinas growers who signed with the Teamsters have been doing everything in their power to prevent this step from happening. During the early part of the harvest, growers were even willing to pay scab labor as much as $6.00 and $7.00 an hour to avoid coming to terms with the Farm Workers. The strike is, however, a must for UFWOC. If the wedge the grape boycott drove in organizing agricultural labor is not to be lost by companies selling out their workers with meaningless union contracts, then UFWOC must take up the challenge it now faces. Indeed, it must take up the challenge despite the knowledge that Southern Texas and Florida—with their huge citrus farms—offer the most fertile territory for new organizing.

NICOLAUS C. MILLS

(Nicolaus C. Mills, who lives and writes in New York, has worked for the UFWOC there and in California.)

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THE WHITE LEFT IN THE MOTHER COUNTRY

THE LEFT, YEAR BY YEAR, BUILDS UP ITS SYMBIOSIS WITH THE RIGHT ON LINES THAT COULDN'T BE BETTER IF THEY WERE WRITTEN BY THE CIA

ROSEMARY RUETHER

In 1957 Franz Fanon, the Algerian psychologist and revolutionary thinker, wrote of the French left:

> It must be pointed out that not a single attempt at an explanation is undertaken on the level of the population of the colonialist country. Because it has no hold on the people, the Democratic Left, shut in on itself, convinces itself in endless articles and studies that Bandung has sounded the death-knell of colonialism. But it is the real people, the peasants and the workers, who must be informed. Incapable of reaching the millions of workers and peasants of the colonialist people and of explaining and commenting on the realities of the drama that is beginning, the Left finds itself reduced to the role of a Cassandra. . . . The French democratic elements and intellectuals are familiar with the problem. Having seen it at close range and having studied it for a long time, they know its complexity, its depth and its tension. But all this knowledge proves futile because it is utterly disproportionate to the simple ideas current among the people. ("French Intellectuals and Democrats and the Algerian Revolution," *Toward the African Revolution,* N.Y., Grove, 1967)

Fanon then goes on to accuse the French Left of a disguised paternalism toward the Algerian revolutionaries which manifested itself in a consuming desire to advise and criticize the policies of the Algerians, while failing to face any concrete problems and refusing to immerse themselves in the political life of their own country. Thus the Left proved irrelevant and worse than irrelevant to the Algerian struggle because it failed to do the one thing that the revolutionaries needed it for, namely to focus back and communicate its position to the masses of the French people.

In a remarkably parallel passage, Sam Brown reports that in February of 1970 Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, the foreign minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the NLF, remarked that she found student radicals very sectarian and reluctant to touch political power.

> She continued that the confused assortment of political objectives on the Left—from legalizing marijuana to overthrowing the government to providing free abortions—dilutes the political impact of the peace movement. The result, she suggested, is that the Vietnamese people and the American soldiers carry the burden of America's social problems. . . . I found these Viet-

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namese revolutionaries far more thoughtful than most young American revolutionaries. Their private conversation was radically different from their strident, ideological press releases, and they seemed to bear little malice toward the American people. They didn't express hatred for Middle America, or even for the soldiers in Vietnam. The negotiators seemed to be tough-minded realists, who expect a long war and don't believe that America is anywhere near collapse. In short, these communist leaders are very connected with reality, where political self-delusion can cost people their lives.

One such delusion within the American peace movement has been the notion that we can retain a private dimension of political morality for ourselves. (Sam Brown, "The Politics of Peace," *The Washington Monthly,* August, 1970)

Sam Brown then goes on to argue that peace politics does not mean finding a sphere of disassociation from the American mainstream where the radical can 'witness' to his purity, but rather the psychologically and politically astute effort to reach Nixon's constituency and communicate to them a critical message in a tone and style that they can relate to, rather than one which needlessly turns them off from the content of the message.

Contrast

I think it is not irrelevant to parallel these two views of the irrelevance of the Left in the colonialist country, from a Third World revolutionary perspective, with the continued insistence of black people in America that the persistent desire of whites, however radicalized, to 'play a role in the black movement' is to be rejected. The one thing concerned whites can do (and the one thing they never wish to do) is to go back and communicate their critical views to their own community. Hayward Henry, chairman of the first Congress of African peoples, meeting in Atlanta on September 3, 1970, when asked why whites and white newsmen were excluded from the Congress, said:

"Such deliberations are not conducive to the presence of whites. We are a family trying to solve problems together. The concerned whites must work with white people to eliminate racism."

The dilemma of the 'white Left in the mother country,' stated quite simply, lies in its simultaneous alienation from and objective identification with the policies of the oppressor society. Its inability to find a constructive way of expressing this contradiction means that it embarks on a politics of personal alienation from its own society whereby it neither communicates with nor makes a realistic effort to make a political impact on its own society. It becomes a marginal group, locked into a conversation with itself, without access to the broader society which remains uninfluenced and even more confirmed in their own 'simple ideas' by this alienation. To justify its radicalism, the Left turns to increasingly desperate ways of associating themselves with the revolutionary peoples, imitating their rhetoric, playing 'guerrilla warrior.' But here they again meet rebuff from the peoples with whom they seek to identify themselves, who insistently declare that they don't need a French or an American or a white ally for this kind of role, but rather for another role, the role of influencing his own people to back off the counter-revolutionary attack, and this is the role which the Left in the dominant society seemingly neither can nor will try to play in any effective way.

Is this a fair criticism? Surely there has never been such a large and vociferous Left in America as exists at the present time, and one which makes such an impact on the media. Yet this size, noise and impact seem matched by a peculiar impotence and frustration at every turn, while the actual political power slips increasingly to the Right, with the evident approval of a sizable majority of that part of the American people who can be reached by pollsters.

In June of this year I attended the New Mobe strategy conference in Milwaukee which was intended to bring together the whole spectrum of the Left; communalists and Panthers, Peaceniks and Welfare Rights Mothers, Old Left and New Left, domestic concerns and Third World Revolutionaries. My overwhelming experience of this conference was that of a bankruptcy of both theory and programs, (except for a vague commitment to participatory democracy in the running of conferences, which was productive of much shouting and general chaos in any attempt to create an agenda). A dynamism without outlet, every program, every line of argument having already been countered—one was left with a kind of tongue-tied rage. One group was a notable exception to this: the Welfare Rights Organization, led by a formidable array of black women, with flying support troops of radical suburban women. WRO was the only truly political, the only truly organized, group at the conference. This was in such startling contrast to the rest of the assembly that the members of WRO themselves, on several occasions, declared their feeling of a need to hold back their own power, lest they simply dominate the whole conference. Nevertheless WRO angrily rejected both radicals who were on their way to the country to cultivate their utopian socialist garden and those who were on their way to a long march to Washington to create cracked heads on the bridges and avenues of the Capital. Both were politically irrelevant in their eyes. The message was plain. Unlike the other participants, WRO was making a revolution for their own constituency, not for some other recipient of their bounty. Like the black and Third World revolutionaries cited above, they insisted that all the subtle rhetoric and ingenious activities of the white Left simply made no contact with

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concrete needs and any real strategy that might relate to those needs.

Levels of Tension

Any attempt to sort out this dilemma, it seems to me, must be based on some effort to make an objective analysis of where the revolutionary tensions in society, both in America and around the world, really exist, and what is their direction. Reducing this analysis to the simplest terms, we might say that there are two levels of revolutionary tension in the world which appear at cross purposes with each other.

On the one hand, we have what I venture to call 'conventional' revolutionary movements in the Third World and among deprived groups within developed countries. These movements result from a disproportionate development of the white Western countries, which went through scientific and technological revolutions in the 17th-19th centuries that put them far ahead of the rest of the world developmentally, and then exported this technological superiority in the form of colonialism. This dominance continues in the form of economic neo-colonialism, buttressed by Western military power, and the United States of America is today the prime representative of this economic-military neo-colonialism. In all fairness we should recognize that this role was partly thrust upon America, partly taken on in what was felt to be the purest philanthropy, but today all this operates as an elaborate obscurantism made the more impenetrable by Manichean anti-Communism.

Third World people basically want what we've got, but without our influence. They are fighting to equalize the goods and resources and technological development of the world, and this involves them in a struggle to throw off Western dominance and simultaneously to make a revolution of internal socio-economic development in their own country. This struggle, which is primarily a nationalist one, nevertheless links them up with Communism for two reasons. First, because Communist states prove to be the states most sympathetic to this national and social struggle in practice, while Western nations are both the present and former colonialists and the counter-revolutionaries. Secondly, Communism, despite its original belief that it was the ideology of post-capitalistic society, has, in practice, from the time of the Russian revolution, been primarily the vehicle for pre-industrialized states to make a rapid industrial revolution under authoritarian, centralized state control.

That this contradiction between original Marxist theory and actual Communist practice has produced all the obfuscation which presently dominates Marxist thought is true, but that is of less and less interest to Third World revolutionaries who are primarily interested in Marxism because it has some methods which work. But the loose pragmatic and basically nationalistic relationship to Marxism and other Communist states among Third World revolutionaries presents only the more glaring contrast to the rigid ideological anti-Communism of Americans especially, who insist on taking, in the most simplistic literal way, international, conspiratorial and atheistic rhetoric of an earlier Marxism, which is largely irrelevant to how Communism is actually used in practice in revolutionary states, such as Cuba and North Vietnam. In effect, by insisting that all Communist states are necessarily under the dominance of a centralized world power centered in Russia and/or China, the U.S. often forces these states into a position where they have no alternative but to be so!

But this Third World, anti-colonial and internal developmental struggle is basically a conventional revolution that wishes to accomplish much of what the West has already accomplished, and, in the process, holds out the possibilities of a real world community of nations which are able to relate to each other on a more equal basis, instead of being dominated by a few advanced technological societies. Such struggles are well within our present competence and comprehension and take neither utopian nor millenarian rhetoric to describe their intentions. Increasingly, nations around the world see the chief threat to world peace lying, not in these revolutionary struggles, but in the interventionalist policies of the United States.

The U.S. has built up a militarized economic and political system that presently takes about 68 percent of the American budget. This military machine simultaneously acts as a counter-revolutionary force around the world and bleeds America itself dry, preventing any real movement toward solving America's own domestic problems of poverty, racism, decay of urban institutions and the like. The obvious conclusion is that this military machine must be drastically reduced, both that America can have funds to deal with its own domestic crisis, and to force it to back off its counter-revolutionary role in the rest of the world, so that, at least, development of underdeveloped nations and movements of national independence can go on in an international sphere not so immediately dominated by American interests and so obscured by unrealistic fears and myths generated to support this American role. The one real role of a Left in the 'mother country' of the U.S., then, is basically to do that job of political demythologizing in a way that can create a national consensus against this kind of international role and militarization of the domestic economy.

Such a role of the Left is hardly one of revolution in America itself necessarily. Conceivably it could quite well go on within existing institutions. However 'undemocratic' in its processes, this society is uniquely a 'mass' society, and if it has been pursuing the present policies, it has been because the vast majority of Americans have

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been persuaded that this is what they want and need. But this policy is not at all in their best interests, either domestically or in terms of international security.

The greatest obscurantism of all takes place when we see basically the old liberal policies of centralism and internationalism, but without their previous social concerns and benefits, being sold to a Republican constituency under the name of old conservative values which originally spoke for exactly the opposite sentiments! It is obvious that the Left, if it had real imagination and access to middle Americans, could make an enormous impact simply by working on the native conservative values of localism and anti-interventionalism and linking up these conservative and deeply-held traits of mind of the American mainstream with a sane international policy. Nixon's policies operate on an elaborate obscurantism of native American conservativism, yet the Left, instead of demythologizing this obscurantism, continually creates rhetoric and tactics designed to play right into its hands! Nothing could be better for the Right than for the Left to posture, quite unnecessarily, as anarchists, Communists and sex and drug freak-outs all at the same time, in the face of a terrified Middle America, already deeply bred with visions of international Communist conspiracy and breakdown of moral values. The Left, year by year, builds up its symbiosis with the Right on lines that couldn't be better if they had been written by the CIA, and the possibility of getting across the real messages that need to be communicated retreat farther and farther from the scene.

The second difficulty for the Left lies in the fact that we really have two quite different levels of revolutionary tension going on simultaneously. The one level, which I have just described, is the one I would call 'conventional.' It moves along the lines of nationalist and technological developments which have been taking place since the scientific revolution in the West in the 17th century. The second level is directed at this very scientific and technological revolution itself, and this struggle appears precisely in the advanced technological nations of the West themselves.

Under the guise of new communalism, anarchism, new life styles, new forms of localism, and the recent alert to the ecological crisis, the ability of either the nature of man in his human relations or the organic nature of the world itself to support mass technological society is being brought radically into question. The second level of revolutionary tension truly lends itself to utopian and milleniarist, and even apocalyptic thinking, because it is a revolution that we have not fought before, and we have no idea what its rules or direction may be. Ironically enough this is the revolution which is actually more closely in line with original Marxist thought of the sort that has been largely abandoned by Communist states in practice. The confusion between these two levels of revolutionary tension which appear to be at counter-purposes with each other accounts for much of the confusion of the white Left in advanced technological societies and their tendency, incomprehensible from the perspective of Third World people, to go off on drugs and free love and radical communes and imagine that thereby they are contributing to the efforts of the Viet Cong.

The Need for Versatility

Having stated this problem in so elaborate and intractable a form, one must somehow offer, if not a 'solution;' at least a direction. The best I can seem to come up with by way of 'direction' is simply to suggest that the radical has got to become a much more versatile fellow. He has got to recognize the imperative need for Third World independent development, and the disastrous threat of American military interventionalism, both around the world and at home, but also recognize that there is simply no short cut to changing this other than creating a new political consensus among mainstream Americans. It is here in the political arena that these policies originate (not in the military or at draft boards) and it is only here that they can be changed.

Only the most widespread, variegated and creative efforts to get at the mind-set of Americans that supports the present policies, not only individually, but corporately, and convince them of other options, can touch this situation. Most of the present scenarios on the Left are either irrelevant or counter-productive to this process at the present time. I have suggested that Middle Americans have been sold a bill of goods which is counter to their real political instincts. Most of the things they fear most could be much more plausibly linked up with the Administration's policies, to the advantage of the critical position of the Left. In addition, we should reckon with the confrontation that is going on over the breakfast table all over Middle America, and to which parents are often listening with at least one ear. All this should offer a tremendous handle for a new political consciousness, if the Left could learn to speak to it and lift it up to a broader understanding, instead of playing into a symbiotic polarization with it.

But the radical, while engaged in the most pragmatic and one might even say 'therapeutic' operations on American society on this level, must also remain a mad dreamer and visionary, ever probing entirely new frontiers as yet unknown. For no sooner has some more just distribution of goods and political power been created in the community of nations, than we shall all be caught up in a dilemma created by mass technological society itself, and will have to search for radically new ways to curb and restructure technological development so that it doesn't run counter to human survival. As the White Queen would say, "It takes all the running you can do to stay in the same place. If you want to get anywhere, you have to run twice as fast."

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DEATH OF THE DEVIL?

Get thee behind me

HENRY ANSGAR KELLY

ARE WE experiencing a new age of Satan? In recent years a house in Canada was officially declared possessed by demons and scheduled for exorcism; a British Dominican was exposed for engaging in a black mass with a group of witches. In Switzerland an ex-priest and his mistress, organizers of an austere religious cult, were charged with the murder of one of their followers, a teen-aged girl whom they allegedly beat to death because she had been sexually and physically possessed by the devil. In San Francisco, the First Satanist Church holds regular rituals, including weddings and funerals, with the assistance of the inevitable nude altar-girl (or rather girl-altar). And on top of it all there was Rosemary and her very unpleasant baby.

Historically, Satan is a literary figure who has made good—by becoming bad. He starts off in the Book of Numbers as an aspect of God himself (you won't find this in the English translation, but it is in the Hebrew text—22:22 and 32). He later appears as one of God's angels, charged with checking up on mankind. In the New Testament, he is the great Tester and Law Enforcer, whose character has undergone a considerable degeneration. He has been accused of police brutality, and his forthcoming punishment is eagerly awaited.

Beginning with Origen, around the turn of the third century, Satan appears as Lucifer, and he is given a monumental flaw; but his *hubris* is not one that would have aroused Aristotle's pity and fear. This patristic version reached its highest expression, appropriately in a great literary form, in Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

The tragicizing of Satan's pride came only in the Romantic Movement, as Mario Praz's *Romantic Agony* shows—even though some Romantics saw the same spirit in Milton. At the same time the Romantics did not really believe in the devil (though one day Shelley was frightened into thinking he had seen him); their admiration for Satan was simply a pose, like that affected by the *fin de siècle* decadents with their black masses, and like that of the present-day cults of devil-worshippers.

We may be inclined to dismiss Satanism along with *Rosemary's Baby* as a bad joke, if not an evil one; but, as we can see from the success of the novel and film, it is a very popular joke that carries with it the nervous exhilaration of blasphemy and the fear of the unknown. One should not, moreover, be surprised to find some stray fanatics in the various Satanic circles who actually believe in the reality and basic benevolence of their dark lord and master. We can also run into some believing Romantics, like Giovanni Papini, who so sympathized with Satan's tragic predicament that he attempted to incorporate into orthodox Christian theology the likelihood of the devil's ultimate salvation.

Papini, however, was a believing Christian; the occultists are not. This makes all the difference. Satan as we have come to know him is a peculiarly Christian creation, and it is among Christians that his reality has the most importance and urgency. Any use made of him by unChristians can usually be regarded as fundamentally frivolous.

Baudelaire's hardly literal remark about the devil's cleverest trick was eagerly taken up as an inspired truth by vigilant orthodoxy; St. Pius X was only one of many who have warned that it is in the devil's own interests for the world to be convinced of his nonexistence. Rome's insistence that the Dutch catechism make explicit the existence of angels holds good for fallen angels as well.

The Catholic church today is undergoing the same sort of self-questioning that exercised liberal Protestantism in the nineteenth century. The doctrinal foundations of Christianity are once again being shaken and tested. The devil hardly ever qualified as a pillar of church belief in traditional circles, though many no doubt considered him to be an important flying buttress.

Some time ago I published a book called *The Devil, Demonology, and Witchcraft,* in which I suggested that the devil and the other evil spirits of the Bible were simply a part of the cultural furniture of the time, which could easily be removed without damaging the structure of Christianity. (The British title, *Towards the Death of Satan,* expresses this aspect of the book more clearly.) Most reviewers in this country received the idea almost with relief; here at least, they felt, was a doctrine that could be sacrificed to the demands of enlightenment without too much ill feeling on any side.

There has been enough of the opposite reaction, however, to convince me that the devil is still a force to be reckoned with. This, of course, is only to be expected, for the Bible we have always with us. The devil will be an integral part of Christian belief as long as Scripture is read with simple faith, as containing divinely revealed information on the makeup and content of the universe. Jesus himself speaks of Satan with such seeming con-

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viction that many sincere Christians could not think of reinterpreting his words, or of disregarding the warnings of the inspired authors of the New Testament. For them the roars of Satan's lionlike insatiability will not cease to be heard, even though these roars are severely muted in many areas.

In a pamphlet called *The Mystery of Satan,* which a kindly person sent to me upon reading a review of my book, it is said that "Demon control seems to prevail in backward unevangelized lands." This, I submit, is not true. The devil and his demons prevail especially in backward *evangelized* lands, since, as I pointed out above, the devil is primarily a Christian entity, and those who have not heard of Christianity get along perfectly well without him. The Greeks and Romans had no spirit in their beliefs that corresponded to the Christian devil, but the early Christians assumed that all the pagan gods were none other than the devil and his angels. Therefore every act of worship and petition and divination was really directed towards Satan.

This idea was revived in the Middle Ages and applied by Dominican missionaries and inquisitors to the simple practices of "witchcraft" and magic that they found among the mountain people of Europe. Thus was invented the new diabolical sect of witches, fought by fire and sword for four hundred years, until by some miracle of common sense the devil dropped out of the picture, and witchcraft returned to being what it has always been, namely, a folk science that attempts to effect impressive results for good or evil by using pathetically inadequate means.

A late and largely literary result of the witch-craze was the invention of the black mass, which *dilettanti* magicians of the 19th century refined into the quintessence of blasphemy. Another result was the invention of a nondiabolical cult of witches. An Egyptologist named Margaret Murray professed to be able to find, especially in the forced confessions of the witches, evidence of a prehistoric cult which lived on into historic times, and survived in opposition to Christianity. Her *Witch-cult in Western Europe* (1921) and later books inspired the formation of covens of witches of the ilk of Sibyl Leek, all of whom claim unbroken links with the ancient cult.

It is mostly "white witches" of this sort that have turned up in the United States, it seems; Sibyl Leek herself in fact has apparently been transvected permanently into our midst. But unfortunately, as I have been told by some students at UCLA, black witches sometimes attempt to move in. The professional witches who publicize themselves can be classified with astrologers who also claim, with more justification, to practice an ancient art. Collegiate and hippy witches are just having fun, while searching for expansion and liberation.

Folklorists assure us that ordinary nondiabolical witchcraft, usually classified simply as superstitious beliefs and practices, is universal. There are, however, still some survivals of the medieval notion of diabolical witchcraft, or at least of ordinary witchcraft that is thought to be effected by the devil's aid. These superstitions are often joined to other traditional beliefs concerning the devil, like those found in the Swiss and Canadian incidents mentioned at the beginning of this article. In my own experience I have found Milwaukee particularly rich in example.

Milwaukeans have told me of personal encounters with witches and with cases of enchantment—for instance, some years ago a student at the archdiocesan seminary was bewitched by a malevolent witch into losing his vocation. Most of these reports come from the German community, continuing a tradition that goes back at least a thousand years, as is evidenced by an extraordinary case of enchantment and possession that occurred in the late twenties and early thirties of this century. A woman from Milwaukee had been subjected to demonic possession by Lucifer and other fallen angels, as well as by souls of the damned; the initial cause of her possession was the woman's aunt, a witch, who had put some magic herbs in her food, and thus gave the evil spirits entry to her. We are told this and other details of her case in the pamphlet *Begone Satan,* published at Collegeville, Minnesota, with ecclesiastical approval.

The pamphlet tells us of one of the several sessions of exorcism undergone by the woman at the hands of an experienced exorcist, Theophilus Riesinger, O.F.M. Cap., who already had a record of nearly twenty successful exorcisms to his credit. The exorcism in question took place in Earling, Iowa, in 1929. The temptation to exaggerate in such cases is almost irresistible, and the author of this account or his informant (the pastor of the local church in Earling) clearly did not resist.

We are served up with a series of diabolical wonders which find no parallel in the notes of the exorcist himself (these were distributed in mimeograph by a Jesuit Father Bunse from the Buffalo mission). Thus, for

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example, the pamphlet says that the afflicted woman could understand a number of exotic languages while in her trances; but the exorcist himself claimed only that she could understand his questions in German, English, and Latin, and that she responded in German and English. It is of great significance, I think, that the evil spirits always spoke in English, whereas Jesus and the saints spoke in German. For the lady was possessed by good spirits a well as bad, and they warned of the coming of the Antichrist in terms that exactly resembled the apocalyptic warnings formulated in Germany in the early Middle Ages. The Antichrist was already born, some years before; he was possessed from the first by the soul of Judas (earlier such tales say Satan; he was the son of an apostate nun of Jewish blood and an Orthodox bishop; his reign of terror would begin at the age of 30 and would last three years (that would put it in the early 1950's), and he would finally be defeated by the Great Monarch (whom Father Bunse identified as Otto Habsburg). The revelation received the blessing of Teresa Neumann of Konnersreuth, and was found to jibe with the La Salette revelations.

I know an Irish Catholic doctor in Milwaukee who is convinced that diabolic possession and obsession are of comparatively frequent occurrence, and he is frustrated at the official church's reluctance to permit the use of exorcism. He wanted, for instance, to have the recipient of the Necedah revelations exorcised. He has told me further that several of his female patients have been attacked by demonic incubi—nightmares in the most horrible and literal sense of the word, that is, devils in male human form who force their attentions upon women at night to the extent of having intercourse with them. Here we see operative on our home territory both of the concepts involved in the Swiss case mentioned earlier.

Diabolical possession is caused by belief in diabolical possession; possession without the devil remains simply an autosuggestive trance or a hysterical fit. The performance of mediums and the displays of convulsive revivalists come under the category of nondiabolic possession.

The Catholic church still preserves all the forms for exorcising the diabolically possessed, and therefore there is always the danger that ordinary pathological or nervous conditions will be complicated by the introduction of the devil. The suggestive power of the rituals of exorcism can be illustrated by an episode that took place in 1949. A young teenage boy in Washington, D.C., became the center of poltergeist phenomena, those mysterious events that sometimes occur especially around persons entering puberty. The boy's Lutheran pastor had no advice on the subject, but a Jesuit friend of the family in St. Louis described the incidents to his local chancery, and without further investigation word came from Archbishop Ritter to the rector of the collegiate church at St. Louis University that he was to begin exorcism at once. As soon as the exorcisms began, the boy began to suffer convulsions and other symptoms of the possession syndrome. The exorcist was convinced that diabolic obsession had changed to diabolic possession, and after a harrowing thirty-five days of anti-demonic prayer and ritual he was able to restore the boy to normality. Which seems to demonstrate that what is induced by suggestion can be cured by suggestion.

It has sometimes been thought that a natural demonology could be formulated, by drawing on the marvels performed by the evil spirits in cases of possession. Some theologians believe that many of the perversities of the human spirit are directly caused by the devil. Msgr. Leon Cristiani, author of a traditional account of Christian evil spirits entitled *Who Is the Devil?* under the pseudonym of Nicholas Corte, wrote a book in his own name some years ago called *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World*. One of the strongest evidences, he feels, can be seen in the products of contemporary artists. I am reminded of a Jesuit friend of mine, a musicologist, who says that the strongest proof that he knows for the existence of the devil is the invention of the Hammond organ.

He is jesting, of course; and one feels that Msgr. Cristiani should be jesting too, distressing as he may find some aspects of the modern scene. I myself am pessimistic enough to believe that man is perfectly capable of inventing all the evil that he has wrought without any instigation from spirits of some supernatural dimension; and I feel that anyone who refuses to acknowledge this fact can hardly come up with a very realistic program for man's betterment. But I also feel that man has an urgent need to cast the blame for his misdeeds elsewhere, and that the devil will remain an important scapegoat for many more years to come.

However, what about those Christians who have been liberated from the awful presence of His Bad Eminence? Can the demonological elements of the Bible and later tradition teach them anything?

The Dutch Catechism is mildly indicative of the off-the-record demythologizing that has been going on in

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Catholic theological and exegetical circles for the last few years. The authors admit that Jesus speaks of Satan as a personal power, but confess that they do not know what powers are at work under the name of Satan or in the accounts of demonic possession. In speaking of the temptations in the desert, they assert that from the viewpoint of salvation history it makes no difference "whether the place, the appearance of the devil, and the threefold form of the temptation are an exact report or a stylization." In the exorcisms recited over baptismal candidates, "the evil which threatens man is told to go away, always addressed as a person—the devil. But the words envisage all evil, including the influence of the sins of others, the evil inclinations of the subject, and his previous errors as regards God."

It is, however, the language and concepts of the Pauline epistles that seem especially adaptable to our own day. We can readily admit that there are forces of evil abroad other than those springing immediately from the individual human being. I do not mean just those impersonal disasters that insurance companies wryly denominate "acts of God"; there are also personal, superhuman powers that afflict us all. They are the powers that be, the principalities and powers that St. Paul speaks of. He considered these powers to be angels who had entrusted to them the administration of the laws of nature, the Mosaic law, and the laws of the various governments of the world. He considered them to be neither completely good nor completely evil, but only as good or as evil as their respective administrations indicated. In spite of a certain basic and persistent pessimism about them and about the devil himself, he eventually came, it seems, to entertain a hope for their ultimate redemption.

The principalities and powers still exist. Some are better than their predecessors and some are worse. They are the governments, Communist, capitalist, and whatnot, of modern nations; the often seemingly conscienceless corporations and conglomerates of the present-day business world; and even the churches themselves, with the angels of the Apocalyptic churches of Ephesus, Sardis, and Philadelphia having given way to the ordinaries of our own Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Los Angeles.

We need no longer direct our primary praise or blame to angelic presidents of boards or chiefs of staff or prime ministers, nor must we fall into the error of doing the same for the human heads of these institutions. To accuse, for instance, Cardinal McIntyre or Governor Reagan of more wrongs or malignancy than they are guilty or even capable of is simply another form of scapegoatism.

The devilish thing about injustice is that often there is no one person really or fully at fault in the matter, and consequently it is difficult to find a remedy. Ambrose Bierce was being overly cynical when he defined incorporation as "the act of uniting several persons into one fiction called a corporation, in order that they may no longer be responsible for their actions"; but it is true that every institution may well be called Legion, for its members are many. Often a debased corporate personality is the result of institutionalization, a union that is subhuman in operation and dehumanizing in its effects. There is often observable in them the same kind of lowering of the level of morality that usually appears in the gathering together of a mob, whether its purpose be to lynch or to liberate.

Institutions are necessary for civilized life, but their imperfections are the causes of most of the mental aberrations and psychoses that were once attributed to the unclean spirits; the modern spiritual diseases have led to crimes beyond the scope of the most diabolical imagination of the past.

It should be the object of religion to oppose demonism both from within and from without the human personality—to exorcise and renounce all forces of degradation. Above all, there is a need in our day to recognize, as the Epistle to the Ephesians puts it, the divine mission of the church "to make known to the principalities and authorities in the upper reaches the manifold wisdom of God."

PINERO AT THE PUBLIC

THE STAGE

At first glance, *Trelawny of the "Wells"* seems an unlikely play to find at Joseph Papp's Public Theater. Written in 1898, set in the 1860's, Arthur Wing Pinero's comedy is, on the surface at least, a familiar love-across-the-classes play in which the disapproving old folk are brought around and the kind friend, secretly in love with the heroine, acts as an avuncular cupid. However touchingly *Trelawny* succeeds at being that kind of comedy, there is a more interesting play embedded in the charm. The unrealistically realistic love plot, which might have come out of Tom Robertson's *Caste* (1867), is not simply set against a theatrical background; the theatrical story is the real one. In the person of Tom Wrench (Pinero's belated testimonial to Robertson), the "kind friend" moves off the periphery of the action, takes center stage. As the author of a new kind of comedy, one that demands practical sets to replace painted flats and a restrained acting style instead of bombastic declamation, Wrench represents one of the perennial revolutions in theater, a moment in which a new style pushes an old one off stage. I doubt if Pinero, who had helped embalm Robertson's revolution, knew that he was about to fall himself, about to be edged out of public favor by Bernard Shaw and his younger associates, but his sym-

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pathetic picture of the Telfers, displaced persons from what Shaw liked to call the theater's "palmy days," suggests that he may have had intimations of what was to come. In any case, today, with "contemporary" theater more than a hundred years old, we know that change follows change, taste swallows taste, style replaces style so rapidly that yesterday's Brando scratch is today's bad joke. *Trelawny of the "Wells"* has become a more serious play than Pinero probably intended when he turned in wry nostalgia to the theater of his boyhood. A play that recognizes, as *Trelawny* does, that the new theater is always a descendant of the old (the recollection of Kean is more than an excuse for comic business with a prop sword) and always about to fall prey to still newer theater, is certainly appropriate to the Public Theater. Papp always seems to me to be a showman moving at a dead run toward the frontier, carrying the history of the theater, somewhat untidily packed, on his back.

Unfortunately, Robert Ronan's production completely misses the meaty *Trelawny*. In fact, before the three-hours traffic comes to an end, the fragile surface play begins to turn into a yawn. The first act is rather fun, catches something of Pinero's affectionate, shabby, essentially bowdlerized picture of what a troupe like that at the "Wells" might be off-stage on a very sentimental occasion. Even here, however, there is obvious misdirection. Wrench should be differentiated from the rest of the company by his everyday manner, the pained self-mockery that is his equivalent of their strident staginess. Ronan, who plays Wrench himself, chooses to separate the character physically, to let him sulk at the edge of the celebration, to allow him to growl lines that Pinero asks be delivered *kindly;* by all the laws of popular theater this sets up Wrench as one of a bonafide love triangle and unnecessarily misleads an audience unfamiliar with the play, one that should be watching Tom for another reason altogether. The charm of the first act comes only occasionally in the next three acts, a scene here, an exchange there, and it is only the unbeatable sweetness of Rose Trelawny's story that keeps the play alive at all. No self-respecting audience, however sophisticated, can resist that kind of sentiment; so one comes away from *Trelawny* with at least a hint of warmth.

I came away with an empty feeling as well, a sense of all that had been missed in the play. It is in the last two acts of *Trelawny* that it becomes clear that Tom Wrench and his comedy are the real subject of the play. Unless the first two acts are correctly performed, Tom's emergence comes as something of a surprise, one that is not much softened by the fact that Pinero plants a brief discussion of Wrench's theatrical ideas in each of the first two acts. The preparation has to be made in the acting itself. The "Theatrical Folk," as Pinero calls them, must appear in Act I as images of their stage selves, performers who bring the bombast of tragedy, the slapstick of low comedy from the stage to the rooming house. If Tom (and Pinero) is to make his point about the contrast between real life and stage life, between the old drama and the new, then the two styles must be presented dramatically from the beginning. If Ablett is played as a stage comic servant, as Dan Durning plays him, instead of as a bumbling greengrocer, weak with laughter at these strange people, the line between the theatrical and the non-theatrical folk disappears; that Pinero gives him comic business with a glove is not an excuse to flaunt it but an opportunity to show that comic business can also be character business. This misunderstanding in Act I turns into disaster in Act II. After Rose has been to Cavendish Square and returned to the theater, we are supposed to believe that she can no longer act old style, having been exposed to "real" people, and yet the Cavendish Square we visit in Act II is people with nothing but comic turns. Pinero makes it difficult for the actors by forcing one character to fall asleep standing up, by making the maiden aunt almost hysterically proper, by turning Sir William into a sputtering, splenetic old man. Yet, these characters must come across as genuine, if eccentric human beings, and they get nowhere near that at the Public. George Bartenieff's Sir William, for instance, is a less funny cousin to Arte Johnson's Tyrone on *Laugh-In*—a stage old man and nothing more. Things get worse. In the last act, Telfer must learn that he is the wrong actor to play an aristocrat in the new comedy and then, in the brief rehearsal scene, the actor who reads the part is so stagily bad that one hopes Tom reconsiders before he opens the show. Even if the final two acts had not been visited with such blemishes, the monumental error of Act II would almost certainly have wrecked the main point of the play. And endangered a second. Not only does *Trelawny* convince its actors that a great reality is necessary on stage, but it teaches the "real" characters that, off stage at least, there are human beings hidden behind the stagey mannerisms of the performers. This is a play that demands subtlety in its vulgarity, intelligence in its sentiment, social comment in its nostalgia. *Trelawny* of the Public is not *Trelawny of the "Wells."* GERALD WEALES

RICHARD E. MCMULLEN

RIVERS

Black waters move beneath the earth,
tunneling great ways. There are no shores.
In my mind a silent river
also moves. On fall mornings
I think of the dark rivers,
and I believe they are the same.
When it is light, when I am walking,
still the rivers move beneath me.

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BOOKS

Even Catholics can read Chesterton 'safely' under Auden's auspices

G. K. Chesterton: A Selection From His Non-Fiction Prose

SELECTED BY W. H. AUDEN

Faber (London), 40s

GARRY WILLS

Catholics are culturally deprived, and one of the oddest deprivations is of Chesterton, supposed to be "their" author. Many Catholics got their first taste of him in high school, in an excerpt that describes the church as a thundering chariot of triumph. Earlier parts of *Orthodoxy* which would speak more intimately to the young—e.g., the section on the anguish and solipsism of adolescence—are either not discovered, or are colored by the first image of the man as a cheery and beery manufacturer of certitudes. Those who read him that way have, in effect, lost him—missed his key interest in dreams and insanity and the dark side of the soul (e.g., in his plays *Magic* and *Surprise*). The real Chesterton is to the pantomime caricature of him what Fr. Brown was to an Eastern mystic, who thought the priest must share with him an interest in strange powers of the spirit. Fr. Brown answered that he was more concerned with the weaknesses of the spirit.

Since Catholics either simplify Chesterton, or reject this simplified version of him, it has been left to non-Catholics to appreciate him adequately—to Trilling, and Borges, and Auden.

It was clear from Auden's book of commonplaces that he knows Chesterton well, but he admits in the introduction to this book that he had not read much of Chesterton's non-fiction, and that little was read years ago. What he admires most (as does Borges) is the poetry and novels and plays. This anthology is not, therefore, the "best of Chesterton" in Auden's view—the subtitle carefully limits the book's ambitions. Yet even here, he says, he was surprised by the quality of the work when he returned to it.

Auden makes a judicious selection from the better-known books, skips over the hasty essays, and finds two of the few *great* essays (the kind that bear frequent re-reading)—an introduction to the Book of Job (characteristically concerned with doubt, and with the inability of argument to answer it) and an introduction to "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (characteristically concerned with dreams). He suggests the continuity of Chesterton's thought by juxtaposing the treatment of fairy tales in *Orthodoxy* (1908) with the treatment of myth in *The Everlasting Man* (1925). "Nobody," says Auden, "has written more intelligently and sympathetically about mythology and polytheism." In effect, he understood the Greeks because he understood the Grimms.

But, good as the selection is, it does betray Auden's limited acquaintance with this side of Chesterton's work. There is a better essay on Milton than the one he uses. And two better essays on Dr. Johnson than the one printed here. (Once again, Chesterton deals with Johnson's doubts and fears about his own sanity and death.) Auden gives three essays on decency and censorship, without finding the best one on that subject (where Chesterton says that we are all a little crazy on the subject of sex, and only the person who doesn't know he is goes *really* crazy on the subject). The best thing he ever wrote on the mystery of language is in his *G. F. Watts* (supposedly about painting), and some of the best things on rationalism, madness and the eighteenth century are in his *William Blake* (a book that is bad on Blake but good on everything else). There should have been more on Shakespeare and less on Shaw, and it is odd that Auden neglects *The Victorian Age in English Literature*, Chesterton's best extended piece of literary criticism.

But one must be grateful for what one gets here. The point is that some people—even, perhaps, some Catholics—can now read Chesterton "safely" under Auden's auspices. This was made evident in the long front-page treatment given to the book by the *Times Literary Supplement*. The reviewer writes a fine essay on Chesterton's "sense of dark forces at large," on his "genius for the

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shape of wickedness." He even justifies the precise sense in which he describes Chesterton as "one of the greatest of modern stylists." Yet he must ritually deplore the fact that Chesterton is treated as "a Catholic Author"—which makes as much sense as deploring the fact that Pope is treated as an Eighteenth-Century Author. Treating the merely descriptive term as if it were denigrative is as much an error—is the *same* error, only turned upside down—as treating the mere description as an accolade. The first thing one finds reading Pope is that there were a lot of dunces writing in the eighteenth century (along with the discovery that this man was not one of them). Calling Pope an enghteenth-century author says nothing about his merit; yet it must be said, in order to place him in the world he inhabited.

Yet obscurantism is made a form of enlightment when we are asked to stop treating Chesterton as a Catholic author—which he obviously was. The result is to perpetuate simplism and false labeling—a task at which the reviewer works very hard. He says, for instance, that we can forget about Chesterton's connection with the church, since it came late, only fourteen years before his death, and he did not write his better stuff in those years. The reviewer forgets that he has heaped praise on Auden's book, which offers 16 selections from the 22 "non-Catholic" years and 18 from the final (Catholic) years. Chesterton's real period of collapse and literary exhaustion had nothing to do with his religious views, and fell in the non-Catholic period from 1914 to 1922. Besides, Auden says in his measured and just introduction that Chesterton was writing out of a Catholic attitude for years before his actual "conversion." Yet this intelligent and sympathetic reviewer for the *TLS* feels he must go through extraordinary maneuvers, to shrive Chesterton of that late shriving, before he can treat the man seriously. What embarrassed Catholics cannot forgive (his Catholicism), others try to forget, unable to look at him otherwise. How few really *free* minds there are in the world.

New Reformation Notes of a Neolithic Conservative

PAUL GOODMAN

Random House, $5.95

JAN B. GORDON

The "notebook" is traditionally the genre of political revolutionaries, madmen behind bars, or schoolchildren. Doubtlessly, many who have read Paul Goodman's previous books, *Growing Up Absurd or Compulsory Mis-Education and The Community of Scholars,* to name just two, would feel that the outspoken sociologist has at last found his proper medium. What a paradox to discover that the man who had been introduced to me at a meeting of the Midwestern Modern Language Association as "the champion of the unwashed" should see parallels between the youth movement of the late sixties and the Protestant Reformation—an upheaval of belief that is of religious depth but which does not involve destroying the common faith so much as purifying and reforming it. Surely, these *Notes of a Neolithic Conservative* are a strange parody of Luther's theses; non-negotiable demands for decentralized administration; the adaptation of the vernacular as an aid to escaping the jargon of an excessively technocratic society; the right of every man to worship in the way he sees fit (read: "Do your own thing"); and an end to the corruption of the industrial-military-university troika. But the dangers posed by the first Reformation are also present in Goodman's analogy. The abstract universalizing and isolation of individuals, an economism that destroys genuine community and real wealth by polarizing evidence of election, the fractured leadership that results in a multiplication of the original schism into numerous religious sects—all make for a limited success of the movement.

On balance then, Goodman's latest book is comparatively more restrained in his advocacy of youth; whereas in the late '50s he had referred to the young as his "crazy allies," *New Reformation* calls attention to their intolerance and the blatant contradictions in the economic philosophy of the New Left. For example, Port Huron rhetoric associates anarchist revolution—decentralized, anti-police, less restriction in the economy, and the premium on grassroots spontaneity—with the Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky (who slaughtered anarchists by the thousands in the Ukraine). Most Marxists regard these communal agrarian drifters as bourgeois revisionists; was it not Marx himself who referred to anarchism as a "peasant ideology?" One suspects that the two systems are as historically incompatible as "participatory democracy" and the establishment of "cadres" whose discipline and tactics are determined at headquarters by an elite. But surely the inconsistencies that Goodman finds in the New Left program are no more visible than those of other political platforms, such as, say that of the Democratic Party in Chicago, 1968. What is unusual is the particular type of confusion to be found among various youth groups, a merging of behavioral psychology and politics. It is almost as if "cadres" were nothing more than *de facto* affinity groups that have been given a political purpose. Anyone who has read Abbie Hoffman must recognize that these students are less interested in the future of the state than in states of being.

Yet, Goodman, for all his astuteness, seems trapped in the "either/or" logic of the old left rather than the "being/and" thinking of today's young people and it is the radical juxtapositions that make the current radical so distant from him. The revolutionary notebook has been replaced by the Black Panther coloring book as part of the reprimitivization that is such an essential feature of the counter-culture in which our youth live. Love beads, oriental cosmology, and drugs are the equipment of primitive, pre-alienated man who was presumably one with his environment and for whom logic had no relevance precisely because he was pre-logical. Goodman's request for some viable political philosophy from

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the New Left is a request for purpose from an increasingly tribalized society which is willing to pay the price of internal contradiction to preserve a fragile unity of being.

To those detractors who would accuse Paul Goodman of fuzzy-liberalism, *New Reformation* appears the private papers of a conservative out of the Jeffersonian mold. In contrast to the current political assumption that physical and social scientists are value-neutral but that their discoveries are "applied" by those who make decisions for the nation, Paul Goodman feels that scientists, inventors, and other workmen are responsible for the uses of the work they perform and that they ought to be competent to judge these uses and have a say in deciding them. In our over-technologized society, the individual is continually up against the contours of some "system" (long before the culture was "up against the wall") which prevents him from pursuing his own interests, using his own powers, and exercising his own initiative.

Goodman's bias, as it has always been, is pluralistic. Instead of the few national goals of a few decision-makers, he opts for a manifold of goods in many activities of life and many professions and interest groups each with its own criteria for excellence. A society that distributes power widely is superficially conflictful but fundamentally stable. Research and development should be widely decentralized, the national fund for them being distributed through thousands of local centers of initiative and decision. For 400 years, Goodman reminds us, Western science progressed with no central direction at all while nonetheless maintaining marvelous international coordination. Today's large technological teams have disadvantages that outweigh their advantages — poor communications, people employed to perform busy work, and "systems analysis" which must be fed by more and more systems.

Coming in for particular attention is education which, in our society, reflects all of the mandarinism implicit in the technocracy. The "knowledge business," as Goodman calls it, now accounts for almost 40% of our spending. Yet, despite this superficial respect for learning, the old are shunted out of sight at an increasingly early age while the young are kept on ice till an increasingly later age. Small farmers and other technologically unemployed are dispossessed and racial minorities are often treated as a nuisance. Combined, these groups make up the majority of our population and their revolutionary alliance may be just around the corner. Goodman thinks it essential that the education that has attempted to reach this group be restructured. Unfortunately, education in our country has become yet another alienating force which eats up lives and money. Goodman favors the substitution of the aesthetics of "play" for the techniques and vocabulary of work:

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creative ability, occurs because a playful, hunting, sexy, dreamy, combative, passionate, artistic, manipulative and destructive, jealous and magnanimous, and selfish and disinterested animal is continually thwarted by social organization and especially by schooling.

In his brief history of education, he calls attention to the original purposes of the educative process, to train wandering shepherds for a few hours a day so that they might cope with the demands of industrialization: reading, writing, and simple addition and subtraction. Gradually, the method used to educate the emblems of pastoral life came to be applied, inefficient though they were, to the professions—law, medicine, theology so that the entire culture was scholasticized.

Now, Goodman argues, we must descholasticize our culture by returning education to environmental education. Students today don't mind risking jail precisely because they are already under conditions of a prison house riot by simply remaining in the classroom.

In his plea for the return of the shepherds, what he calls "incidental education," the author's practical proposals are intriguing. Among them is the mini-school, vest-pocket institutions set up in storefronts with a maximum of sixty students. Such organizations

of students and teachers would effectively minimize school costs by doing away with expensive buildings and administrative staffs while simultaneously speeding urban renewal. Most high schools should be eliminated, with other kinds of youth communities taking over their sociable function; college training should generally follow rather than precede entry into the professions. We must simply invent new useful activities that offer educational opportunities competing with those of the university. The long-range goal is the postponement of socialization in order to protect the child's free growth.

Goodman's argument is finally pervaded by a deep respect for nature; cutting back formal schooling is necessary because it arrests growth and is hence *contra naturam*. Schooling does not prepare one for performance (as if even that were a respectable goal), but is carried on primarily for its own sake. Borrowing from James Conant's thesis, Goodman reminds us that only a small fraction, the academically talented, about 15 percent, thrive in schools without being bored or harmed by them. It is the final irony of the conservative's protestantism that he should accuse the corrupt system of putting self-interest above the interests of the parishioners.

Goodman's proposals should not go unchallenged. There is a tendency to equate decentralization with smallness in his work, in spite of the evidence that small education and the typical small business is often a nest of inefficiency with no guarantee of a quality product. One suspects that internal competition in science or education or business can only be carried on by firms that have reached a certain size; the model of pluralism is more likely to be General Motors than Studebaker. Hence the return of the small school *per se* is not sufficient to achieve the reformation that Goodman requests without a shift in consciousness.

There is also a confusion in the two goals of Western education in his thought: the organic ideal which insists that the self must be allowed to grow with as little interference as possible and which assumes an analogy between human development and plant development and the other scheme, which envisions growth as a dialectical process through the mediation of various interlocutors and, above all, through progressive encounters with a series of imaginative models. Nature does not always provide the second, even to the eyes of shepherds.

But Goodman's *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative* would be an exciting document, even if one disagrees with some of its author's premises. Almost novelistic in structure, the book moves from the environment in which our sciences and professions breathe, to the educational structures which feed them, and finally, to the increasingly private confessions of its author. The movement of *New Reformation* is part of the humanistic journey to decentralization. A chapter on the political conversion of Paul Goodman's late son, Matthew, is both emotionally moving and relevant to a religious document. The last chapter is quasi-confessional in its account of the social problems which make Goodman himself one of the alien.

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mation recently, I was surprised to learn that in 1517 Luther was 30, Melanchthon was 20, Bucer was 26, and Munzer was 28. That is to say that the first split was largely the work of graduate students and junior faculty who had "radicalized" some of the undergraduates with the demand to cleanse and purify the self-sustaining intellectual environment permeated by up-tight monks. That a man nearing 60 should see the ironies in our new crisis of consciousness is nothing short of incredible.

Man Becoming: God in Secular Language

GREGORY BAUM

Herder and Herder, $6.95

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

Gregory Baum is one of the most creative and productive theologians in the Catholic Church today. This judgment is not universally accepted, even among his professional colleagues. Perhaps it is because he thinks and writes with such clarity, and does not inflate his work with a superficially impressive scientific apparatus.

He does not confuse systematic theology with history, textual analysis (whether of the Fathers and medieval theologians, on the one hand, or even of the Bible, on the other), or essentially expository, and only mildly critical, summations of other theologians' thoughts. He sees that theology is a matter of systematically reflecting upon one's presumed perception of the transcendent in human experience and history, and then of expressing that perception in language which is at once intelligible, consistent, and coherent. Pursuant to this end, theology may close itself to no area of intellectual enlightenment, whether it be psychology, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, literature, and so forth.

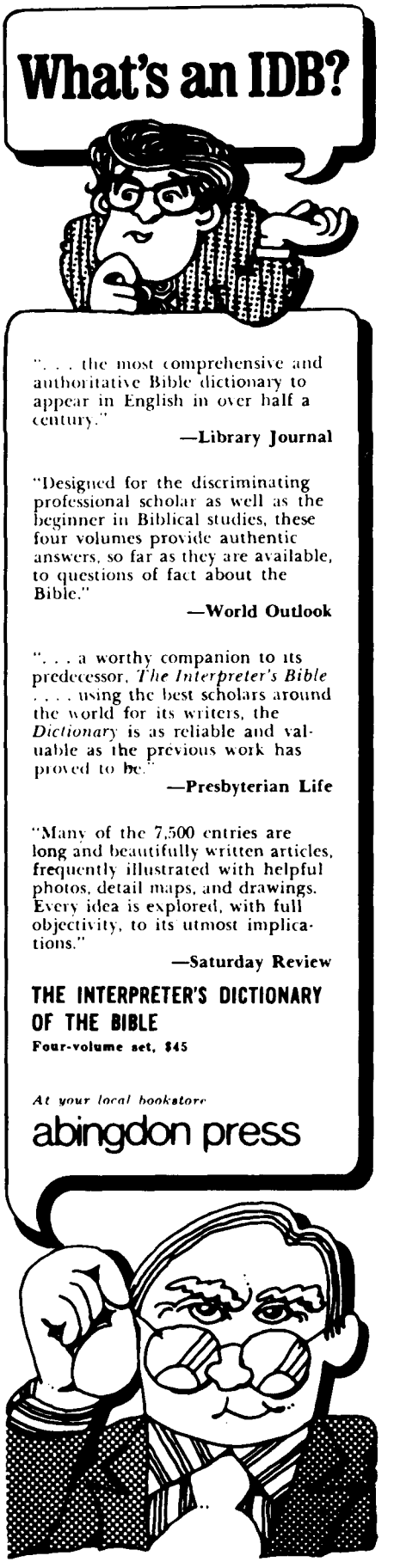
In this latest book of his, Father Baum follows some lines of thought marked out earlier by Maurice Blondel and Karl Rahner: God is redemptively present to human life and history, and so there is no basis for the traditionally rigid distinction between the order of nature and the order of grace. The originality of the effort consists in Baum's application of "a psychologically-oriented phenomenology to show that ordinary human life is not ordinary at all but, in fact, highly dramatic, a field of conflict between forces of self-destruction and powers—unexpected powers—of creativity and new life." This approach enables him to speak of God and his revelation in an ordinary, largely nontechnical way, and thereby to create a language about the divine that can be used in preaching and teaching to men who happen to have no special academic background.

Those who have read two of Baum's earlier works, *The Credibility of the Church Today* (Herder and Herder, 1968) and *Faith and Doctrine* (Newman, 1969), will be familiar with this book's major presupposition; namely, that we are experiencing a fundamental shift in the way we understand and express the Gospel, that this change in perspective has its origin in the thought of Maurice Blondel, and that it permeates much of contemporary Catholic theology and is to be found even in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, especially *Gaudium et Spes*.

God is not an outsider to human history, manipulating human affairs according to his own whims or in view of some primitive plan. He is redemptively present to human life as that reality which makes "the new" genuinely possible.

Baum specifies three problem-areas which have often generated objections against his thesis: the role of the church, the reality of eternal life, and the question of the supernatural order.

Why should there be any need for the church if grace is universally present and available to all mankind? Doesn't the church become superfluous and haven't we thereby abolished the distinction between church and world? Baum responds that the church is still set apart by its affirmation of Jesus as the definitive expression of God's Word, but we must now think and speak of the church dialectically, i.e.,



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Moya

ONE OF THOUSANDS of boys in Quito, Ecuador, Moya is an Indian, six years old. Like his brothers, he doesn't go to school: there isn't any nearby. Anyway, everyone works—or there won't be any potatoes and beans and coffee at night. His mother is ailing a lot, never has energy enough to catch up on the housework. His father? Moya can't remember him.

Boys like Moya usually start shining shoes at six years (what other jobs are there?), move up to running errands at eight or nine, then to a laborer's job at 15. But at 17 they wake up. This is no way for a man to live—so they start to steal, to push old men or drunks around and take their wallets. They also begin to carry knives, for protection. By 19 they are married, try hard for a while to keep the family going as the children come along—but finally, like Moya's father, they can't get work, start drinking a little, lose heart and abandon home. The cycle has come completely around.

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affirming its uniqueness, yet recalling that redemption goes on everywhere.

Doesn't this immanentist approach tend to secularize Christian faith to the point where we lose interest completely in anything but the present world? The message of eternal-life, he argues, is not information about another world. To believe this message means to believe that God ever creates life out of death, that tomorrow will be different from today, that in all situations, even when misery invades men's lives, greater humanization will be offered to men. We do not know if human history will have a successful outcome. We know only that God will not withdraw his presence, and that true humanity will always be given as a real possibility in every situation.

Finally, doesn't this thesis destroy the order of the supernatural as a distinct reality over and above the natural? In the book's best chapter (V. "Holiness in the New Perspective"), he argues effectively against the persistent threat of Pelagianism (holiness comes through will power and personal effort) and offers a severe critique of much traditional asceticism as something which, in its frenetic concern to suppress the spirit of self-love, unwittingly accelerated the drift toward self-hatred.

The last three chapters expose in some detail the central thesis about God. Baum offers two principles of interpretation: (1) There is no human standpoint from which God is simply man's over-against, i.e., he is never a special object of human knowledge because, as object, he does not exist; and (2) every sentence about God can be translated into a declaration about human life (see also Karl Rahner's article, "Theology and Anthropology," in *The Word in History*, Sheed & Ward, 1966, pp. 1-23). Thus, to say that "God exists" means that man is always more than man, that man is alive by a principle which transcends him and which summons him to be creative.

He applies these principles of interpretation to such traditional problems as creation, judgment, the divine attributes, prayer, and miracles. "In discussing divine providence," he says, "a theologian must put his cards on the table." When he does, Baum's hand looks remarkably similar to that of the Dutch Catechism. God is not responsible for evil, nor does he benignly permit it. He actively fights against it. God is provident in the sense that "in whatever trap a man falls, a summons continues to address him and offer him new life that makes him more truly human. This is Good News."

This extraordinarily suggestive work is not without its weaknesses. First, if this project had not been interrupted by the other two books mentioned above, *Man Becoming* could have been a more tightly organized and adequately developed volume. For example, the apologetical argument for the reality of transcendence is better developed, it seems to me, in *Faith and Doctrine* than it is here.

Secondly, Father Baum never provides anywhere (in this book or in any of his other writings) a Christological apologetic. Why indeed, do we affirm the uniqueness and ultimacy of Jesus of Nazareth? He never really explains his statements about Jesus of Nazareth as they appear, for example, on pages 93, 236, and 238, whereas he has spent some effort here and elsewhere in offering some defense of the reality of God and the function of the church.

Thirdly, when Baum tries to outline his distinctive version of Blondelian anthropology in a crucial second chapter, his lucidity and simplicity become

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REVIEWERS

GARRY WILLS is the author of the newly published *Nixon Agonistes* (Houghton, Mifflin).

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a liability, not an asset. He claims too much (e.g., see p. 57) for the arguments he finally advances.

Fourthly, some of the author's statements reflect a residual ecclesio-centrism (pp. 35-5 and 69), his treatment of the sacraments is sketchy and generally unsatisfying, and his defense of infant baptism is imaginative but ultimately unpersuasive.

Custom dictates that, at this point, one should insist that these deficiencies do not substantially detract from the general quality of the work. In this instance, what custom dictates, truth requires.In a generally bleak publishing year, Gregory Baum's *Man Becoming* is a blue patch in a smog-soaked sky.

The Church in a Marxist Society

JAN MILIC LOCHMAN

Harper & Row, $5.95

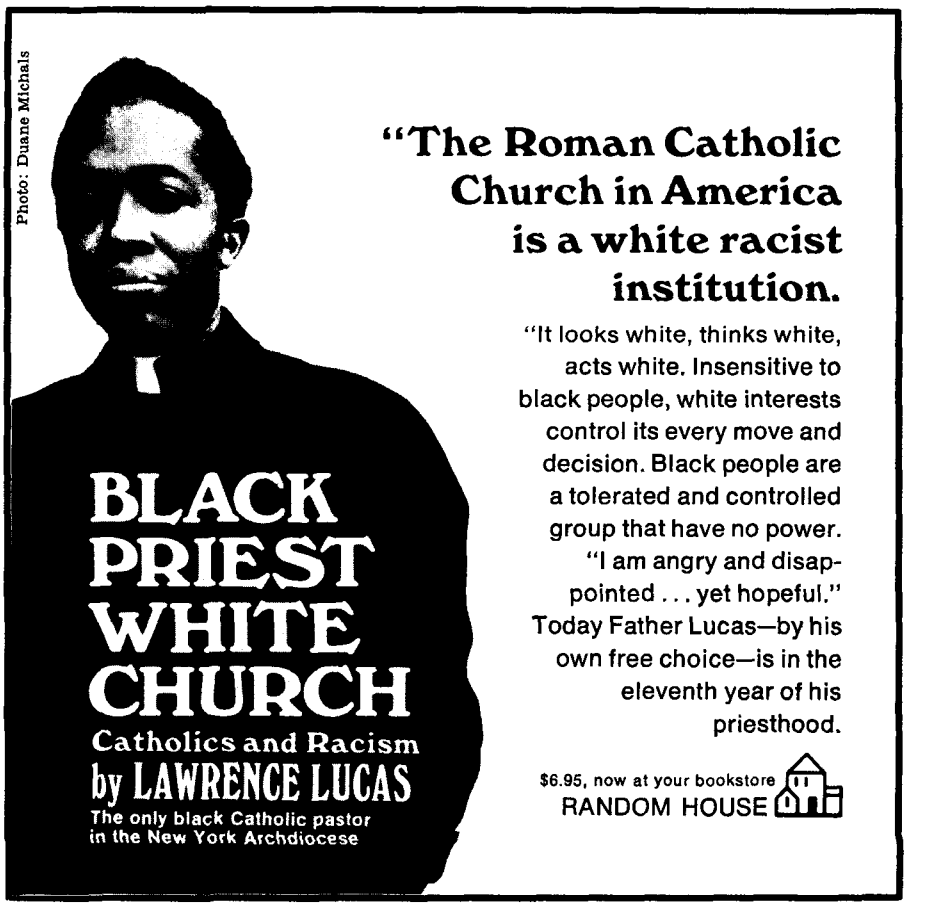
CHARLES C. WEST

This book is finely balanced theology growing like a well-groomed garden from the soil of a vital church. It is also an account—one of the few and the best that we have—of the spiritual life of the author's native Czechoslovakia, both Marxist and Christian, up to and including the verdant springtime of 1968. But the heart of it is a small chapter: "Christmas in Unexpected Places," where the author shows us case by case what it is like to be the church in a Marx-Leninist society.

The stories he tells are disarmingly simple. Frantisek, a lawyer and high government official, was broken, tried and imprisoned in 1948, and after his release had to start a new career as an industrial worker. He took this as a calling not as an exile and *became* a Christian worker. Jiri, a young pediatrician, active in his church, was invited to join the Communist Party—the road to advancement and a recognition of his abilities. He refused because he was a Christian, and opened a channel of active dialogue and personal ministry toward Communists who trusted him for his honesty. Christian scientists—they are supposed to be a contradiction in terms in a socialist society—turn their research to humanizing a planned society. Theological students fight their way into the pastorate against all the pressures of society and live there, on a meager salary, a style of overflowing humanity that unsettles even the traditional church people. The impression gradually builds up. Here are ordinary people whose witness to their Lord is simply the power to be creative human beings in an atheist society.

What makes this possible? What is it about church life in Czechoslovakia that breeds this quality we find so seldom in western Christendom? Lochman has one simple answer: the church no longer has any status or privilege to defend. "In the post-Constantinian society the Christian can hardly be an opportunist. The one ground for becoming and remaining a Christian in that situation is the ground of faith. You have nothing to gain by being a Christian. Rather you may lose. Thus the shadow of hypocrisy grows less. And here is the chance for a new credibility."

The book is basically an elaboration of this theme. It requires, Lochman says, a new style of theology: neither self-enclosed in a secure system nor subservient to the reigning ideology but dialogical. The final chapter is an account of what this dialogue has meant to both Christians and Marxists, challenging the old structures of thought in each camp in the search for a new humanity. It requires a new style of Christian life: a pilgrim style which accepts the insecurity of earthly institutions and uses them as means to point toward the promise of the coming Kingdom of God, a style which challenges all the structures of society with a higher goal while affirming the real accomplishments of a socialist society. Lochman is proud of the equality of socialism in his country, where no one is in want and no one is overrich, where the economy is a public responsibility and the basic needs of health and education are available to all. But



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the special calling of Christians he believes, is to make the vast machine sensitive to personal relations, needs and freedoms, to open it and make it flexible and remove its tyrannies.

The name for all of this is pro-existence, living for the neighbor, and offering him hope in critical solidarity with his deepest needs. Lochman could have been even more eloquent than he is on the fruitfulness of this approach in preparing the spirit of the 1968 renaissance. It all began, as one Czech Marxist explained to me, in quiet conversations about the deepest things of life, in factories, in farms, and in Gottwald's prisons, where Christians and Marxists began to teach and learn from each other.

This, then, is how the book should be read, as a theological testimony out of one of the most creative encounters between Christianity and Marxism in modern times. It has other values as well. The author begins with a sketch of the peculiar heritage of the Czech Reformation which will be new to most readers. He summarizes in popular form in the last chapters some of the best wisdom of recent theology on secularization, ideology, and atheism. These stand as useful essays. They are not well enough integrated into the rest of the book. They are not thorough enough to make an original contribution. But they are illuminating when one realizes that they are fragments of the encounter that went on in Czechoslovakia and illustrations of how theology is done on at least one front line.

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To A Dancing God

SAM KEEN

Harper & Row, $5.95

BERNARD COOKE

Some books practically defy review; Sam Keen's *To A Dancing God* is one of these. It is so highly personal, both in its message and in its style, that any attempt to give an objective criticism of its content will inevitably fail to convey accurately the thrust of this book.

What the book calls for is a response as personal and profound; but this would require at least a book and a talent comparable to Keen's. The latter would not be easy to find, for Keen has the gift of probing in clear and strikingly imaginative form the most basic and critical questions of our contemporary world—more specifically its religious questions.

The literary character of Keen's theological writing goes much deeper than an attempt to present his ideas in an interesting fashion; it is a direct expression of his fundamental theological method: as he states explicitly a number of times and exemplifies in the book as a whole, Keen maintains that a theologian's task is essentially one of probing and giving expression to his

LETTER

JOHN FANDEL

Nothing's the same.
The houses left are Funeral Parlors,
primped and prinked beyond habitation;
corpses, rouged, in crinkled satin lie
in parlors where we played blindman's buff.
Gutters are obvious. The Sacred Heart
has vanished; Washington Park,
a car graveyard; the old school,
Rat Palace, a broken sieve of empty sashes.
Through gardens where lily of the valley
softened heatwaves, Thru Traffic speeds
on jellied air exhausted by Chrysler. Christ
is a synonym for every corner
word. No one curbs his cur.
A new Bill
proposes the dry links.

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own religious experience. Out of the reflection upon his own human strivings for more authentic life and his attempts to relate to "the sacred" the theologian can, hopefully, contribute to the general understanding of the human situation.

This would seem to reduce theology to phenomenology; and at one point the author explicitly says that this is what theology must be. Much of the book is an interestingly non-technical exercise in just such a phenomenological method. Admitting the important contribution of religious phenomenology and the sad neglect of this discipline by many theologians, I would not agree that theology should restrict itself to this level of reflection.

Actually, my disagreement goes much deeper, to the understanding of what is meant by "revelation" and of how it is meant to function in men's individual and social existence. Unless I misread Keen, he wishes to deal with man's "religious" dimension without an appeal to or dependence upon any special normative revelation. Certainly, there is need to move away from a superficial or magical notion of the revelation made to men in Jesus of Nazareth; and Keen is only one of many who is raising the radical questions connected with a re-appraisal of Christianity. However, it seems to me that the very elements of positive human achievement and creativity that Keen stresses in his psychological approach to "religion" gain in strength if traditional faith in the death and resurrection of Christ is grounded in a unique event and in a mystery of Christ's continuing presence to his followers.

Obviously, a thorough clarification of our respective views in this area would require long discussion—which, judging from this book, I would truly enjoy and from which I would greatly profit. But I would not wish to obscure the importance of Keen's stress on personal experience as the starting point of both religion and theology. Equally important is his emphasis on the discovery of "the sacred" in the ordinary realities and happenings of men's daily lives; though I suspect that there has been a long-standing Christian tradition on this point (admittedly not the dominant one in Christian religious thought) which in "seeing God in all things" is radically opposite to the insights of Eastern spirituality.

With his insistence on the primacy of personal experience, Keen might be expected to share the disdain for history that marks so many young people today. Yet, while he is sympathetic with this anti-historical attitude of the young, Keen is clearly aware of the role that history and tradition must somehow play in giving perspective and meaning to the "now." In this regard his chapter "Reflections on a Peach-seed Monkey" is a little gem; it is filled with implications and could well serve as a basis for profitable discussion on the nature and function of tradition.

Like his *Apology for Wonder,* Sam Keen's *To A Dancing God* is marked by a brightness of style and enthusiasm for life and that makes it not only an interesting piece of theological writing but also—and perhaps more importantly—a book that can bring a sense of the sacred into the lives of those who read it. This book is contemporary religious writing at its best.

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 139*)

read their—not only their political leaders but their military leaders—the emphasis is on defense." This, from his press conference of March 14, 1969, when the President gave the green light to the ABM system, and added the above comment to support his position that the Soviets would not react aggressively or offensively.

Lest I be accused of attributing any new ideas to Nixon, I'd guess that his remarks reflect the sum total of 25 years of Pentagon briefings, National Security Council discussions, official "working papers," and other system "inputs," that clearly illustrate the long-standing assumptions of U.S. foreign policy makers. RICHARD B. DU BOFF

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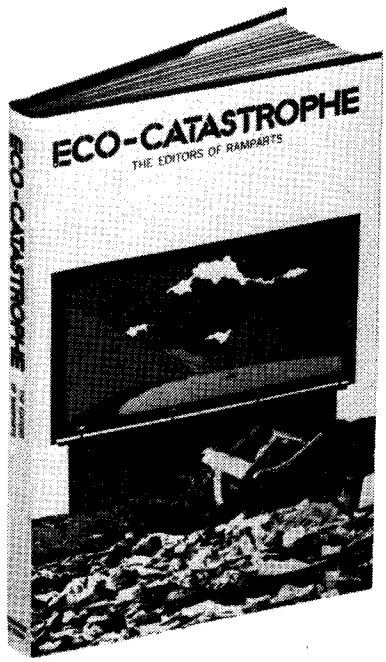

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